

Purpose of the Policy

St Michael's CE(A) First School is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all children to benefit from school activities and visits, regardless of financial circumstances, and has established the following policy and procedures to ensure that no child is discriminated against by our offering of school trips, activities and educational extras. This policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a good range of visits and activities is offered, whilst at the same time, trying to minimise the financial barriers that may prevent some children from taking full advantage of the opportunities.

In addition, we are committed to adhering to legal requirements regarding charging for school activities, and meeting all statutory guidance provided by the DfE. Please note that while this policy may be more or less generous than the LA's, we have ensured it meets the requirements of the law.

Legal framework

This policy will have consideration for, and be compliant with, the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Education Act 1996
- The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) (England) Regulations 2010
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- DfE (2018) 'Charging for school activities'
- DfE (2020) 'Governance handbook'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies and procedures:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- The school's Scheme of Delegation
- Freedom of Information Policy
- Debt Recovery Policy
- Pupil Premium Policy
- Educational Visit Policy

Charging for education

We will not charge parents for:

- Admission applications.
- Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, or equipment).
- Education provided outside school hours if it is part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for by the school, or part of RE.
- Instrumental tuition, unless provided at the request of the pupil's parents.

We may charge parents for the following:

- Materials, books, instruments or equipment, where they desire their child to own them
- Music tuition (in certain circumstances)

- Vocational tuition (in certain circumstances)
- Use of community facilities
- Provision of information within the scope of freedom of information.

Optional extras

We may ask for a voluntary contribution for the following optional extras:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not:
 - Part of the national curriculum
 - RE
- To support visits which involve an outside group of specialists who come into school to provide a better offer than that supplied through an external visit off-site
- Transport, other than that required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the LA has arranged for the pupil to be provided with education
- Board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit
- Extended day services offered to pupils (See Out of school care terms and conditions)

When calculating the cost of optional extras, the school will only take into account the cost, or an appropriate proportion of the cost, of the following:

- Materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in relation to the optional extra
- Buildings and accommodation
- Employment of non-teaching staff
- Teaching staff (including TAs) under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra

The school will not charge in excess of the actual cost of providing the optional extra divided by the number of participating pupils.

The school will not charge a subsidy for any pupils wishing to participate but whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

If a proportion of the activity takes place during school hours, the school will not charge for the cost of alternative provision for those not participating.

The school will not charge for supply teachers to cover for teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

Participation in any optional activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Therefore, parental agreement is a prerequisite for the provision of any charges to be made.

If a charge is to be made for a particular activity, as listed above, parents will be informed of how the charge will be calculated.

Responsibilities

The governing board of St Michael's is responsible for determining the content of the policy and the headteacher for implementation. The responsibility for determining the level of voluntary contribution is delegated to the headteacher.

Voluntary contributions

The school may, from time-to-time, ask for voluntary contributions towards the benefit of the school or school activities. If an activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the school will make this clear to parents at the outset. The school will also make it clear that there is no obligation for parents to make a contribution, and notify parents whether assistance is available.

No pupil will be excluded from an activity simply because their parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will still be given an equal opportunity to take part in the activity. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund an activity, and the school cannot fund it via another source, the activity will be cancelled.

The school will strive to ensure that parents do not feel pressurised into making voluntary contributions.

The following is a list of additional activities organised by the school, which require voluntary contributions from parents. These activities are known as enrichment activities. This list is not exhaustive:

- visits to museums;
- sporting activities which require transport expenses
- outdoor adventure activities
- visits to the theatre
- school trips
- musical events
- expert coaching or training

Admission

There is no charge for admissions into our school.

Music tuition

Music tuition is the only exception to the rule that all education provided during school hours must be free. The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007 allow for charges to be made for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually or to groups of any size - provided that the tuition is at the request of the pupil's parents.

At St Michael's, small group and individual music tuition is offered through individual third parties who liaise with parents and charge them directly for tuition.

Transport

The school will not charge for:

- Transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the LA has a statutory obligation to provide the transport.
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing board or LA has arranged for pupils to be educated.

Residential visits

The school organises one residential visit per year for Year 4 pupils. Parents are given significant notice of charges for this visit and have the opportunity to pay in instalments.

The school will not charge for supply teachers to cover for teachers accompanying pupils on visits. The school will charge for board and lodging, but the charge will not exceed the actual cost. School will ensure that any possible exemptions to payments required by external providers of residential visits are communicated to parents.

Damaged or lost items

The school may charge for the cost of replacing items that are damaged or lost due to the negligence or poor behaviour of pupils or their parents/carers. Parents/carers will only be charged the replacement cost to purchase the same or equivalent item. The school will consider waiving costs in exceptional circumstances (e.g., financial hardship). An up to date list of such charges can be found in appendix 1.

Remissions

In some circumstances remissions will be applied. This will be at the discretion of the headteacher and is likely to occur when families:

- Are eligible for Free School Meals
- Are in receipt of pupil premium funding
- Are experiencing financial hardship
- Have individual circumstances that prevent them from meeting the cost at the time . These should be discussed with the headteacher.

School trip refunds

In the event that the school has to cancel a trip due to foreseen circumstances, parental contributions will be refunded with the condition that this money has been refunded by the organisation running the activity or planned visit/residential.

In the event that a school trip is cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents. The headteacher will consult the governing board on the matter, taking into account the cost to the school, including alternative provision cost.

In the event that a school trip is postponed due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the headteacher's discretion as to what happens with the parental contributions for the trip. The headteacher will discuss options with the governing board, which could include carrying forward the money until the trip takes place, transferring the money to another trip, or refunding parents.

In the event that the decision is made to postpone a trip due to foreseen circumstances, it is at the headteacher's discretion as to what happens with the parental contributions for the trip. The headteacher will discuss options with the governing board, which could include carrying forward the money until the trip takes place, transferring the money to another trip, or refunding parents.

In the event that a pupil or their parents cancel the pupil's place on a trip, it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given. The headteacher will consult the governing board on the matter, taking into account the reason for cancellation, whether the school will be reimbursed for the pupil's place on the trip, and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another pupil.

In the event that a pupil cannot attend a trip at the last minute, e.g. due to illness, it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given. The headteacher will consult the governing board on the matter, taking into account whether the school will be reimbursed for the pupil's place on the trip and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another pupil. Once trip arrangements have been booked and confirmed, if contributions exceed the total cost of the trip, a refund will be given where the excess is greater than £1 per pupil. If the excess is less than £1 per pupil, this will be paid into the school's account.

Excess expenditure will be subsidised by the school fund.

The school will deal with cancellations and refunds on a case-by-case basis, ensuring that all pupils and their families are treated equally.

If a parent wishes to make a complaint about refunds, they can do so via the Complaints Procedures Policy.

School meals

There is no charge for children who are entitled to free school meals or universal free school meals for infants. Pupils who are not entitled to free school meals will be charged a set amount determined by Edwards and Ward Catering (the external provider of school meals at St Michael's). A list of up to date charges can be found in appendix 1.

Milk

Milk is provided free for all children until the week of their 5th birthday. After this date, parents are able to register with Cool milk and purchase milk for their children directly.

Swimming

The school organises swimming lessons for Years 3 and 4. These take place in school time and are part of the National Curriculum. We inform parents and carers when these lessons take place, and we seek written permission of parents or carers for their children to take part. There is no charge for this activity to the parent or carer.

Sports Coaching out of school hours

The school may offer additional sports coaching after school. A qualified coach, who is not a member of staff, runs and organises these sessions. A small charge is made for these sessions, the total of which does not exceed the cost of the tuition. Additional free sports clubs may be available.

Other extracurricular clubs

A small charge is payable by parents and carers who wish their child to participate in particular after-school clubs where consumables are required. This money goes directly into school fund in order to purchase items for school.

Collecting Payment

St Michael's is a cashless school and, as such, all fees and charges are collected via Parent Pay or childcare vouchers. The only exceptions to this would be for:

- letting charges which are detailed in the lettings policy.
- Cash collected as part of a voluntary fundraising event

As soon as pupils start school, parents/carers will be provided with a log in for Parent Pay. Due to administration charges by Parentpay, the school is unable to refund balances less than £5 when their child leaves the school. Balances can be transferred to other family accounts and this should be arranged directly with the school office. It is our expectation that Parentpay balances are kept in credit at all times.

Variation to charges

As per the school's scheme of delegation, charges which are likely to change within the review period of the policy are listed in Appendix 1 which is updated regularly. These charges are determined by external providers. All changes to charges will be communicated to parents as soon as practicable.

Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme

The school's Freedom of Information Policy and Freedom of Information Publication Scheme sets out where fees may be charged for the provision of information.

Date adopted by Governing Body: 24th January 2024

Date for review: Jan 2025

Version	Author	Changes	Date
1	School	New policy	24.1.24

Appendix 1: Current charges last updated 29.1.24

Chargeable Item	Provider	Cost to pupils
School meal - pupil	Edwards and Ward	£2.83
School meal - adult	Edwards and Ward	£3.50
Replacement house point badge	PTS	£1.50
Replacement library books	TBC	Ind cost of replacement